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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
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Cooperating

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Washington, D. C.

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR WORK IN POSTURE IN CONNECTION  
WITH 4-H CLUB FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Miriam Birdseye, Extension Nutritionist

1. Training for leaders.

Leaders should be given at least one and preferably two half-day training schools in posture, for normal adolescents, by a qualified person. The speaker should use plenty of illustrative material 1/ and should furnish supplementary subject matter in outline form. The leaders should actually do, under supervision, the things they expect to have the club members do later. It would be well to have two club members or two boys of club age to use as living models - one in good nutritive condition with good posture, one underweight with rather poor posture. Models should wear close-fitting bathing suits; or better - running pants.

The following points should be included:

1. Posture standards---Position of the skeleton in good and poor posture (with special reference to preadolescent and adolescent years).
2. Effect of poor posture on breathing, digestion, and elimination; other effects.
3. Muscle groups concerned in posture; necessity for strengthening these muscles.
4. Meaning of muscle tone; judging good and poor muscle tone; effect of poor muscle tone on posture; effect of inadequate diet or preventable defects such as adenoids, diseased teeth or tonsils on muscle tone. Need for building up underweight children before they undertake strenuous exercise.
5. Good standing posture; how to improve standing posture; ways of standing which make for poor posture. Method of lining up for posture with pole or plumb line. Points that should be in alignment.
6. Good posture in walking.

1/ See "Posture - Selected List of Illustrative and Reference Material (157-37, mimeo.). Single copies free on request from the Division of Cooperative Extension, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

7. Proper sitting posture; effect of poor sitting posture upon standing posture; characteristics of chairs suitable for writing, relaxation, dining chairs for small children.
8. Proper positions in sleeping; effect on posture of sagging springs or mattress, high pillows, overheavy bed coverings.
9. Sports and games good for strengthening muscle groups concerned in posture.
10. Exercises valuable for posture training.
11. Place of posture training in the 4-H club; limitations of the untrained worker; need for expert diagnosis of serious posture defects.
12. Plan for emphasizing posture in connection with the work of 4-H clubs.
13. Illustrative material, playlets, etc., available on posture. 1/

## II. Suggestions for including posture work in program of 4-H clubs.

Meeting 1.--Organization meeting for the club. No work in posture at this meeting.

Meeting 2.--Thirty minutes for posture.

- a. Good posture and fine action are required in all prize-winning livestock. Members spend much time training their animals to stand so as to show off good points. Canning clubs arrange their exhibits to show to best advantage; clothing clubs press garments to improve their appearance.
- b. The standard for a 4-H club member includes a fine bearing. Good posture is a social and business asset and an important contribution toward positive health. Good posture contributes to prowess in athletics. Muscle groups which hold body.
- c. Standards of good and poor posture. (Children's Bur. charts, bromides or photostat enlargements of U. S. Dept. Agr. posture silhouettes and other negatives. 1/). Posture means good body mechanics in action even more than in standing or sitting still.
- d. How to test for standing posture. Club checks up each member and selects members who rank first, second, and third at this first survey. Decides how many qualify for A and B posture.
- e. Leader shows club members how to correct standing posture and "stand tall." He explains connection between muscle tone and

posture, need of proper diet, and freedom from diseased tonsils, adenoids, etc., to develop good muscle tone. Urges good food habits and correction of defects.

- f. Club should vote to make another survey in 2 or 3 months and see whether other members can outstrip the three grading highest at the present meeting, and how many can qualify for A and for B posture, respectively.
- g. Leader has members demonstrate following exercises 2/ for strengthening abdominal muscles, one of the keys to good posture.
  - (1) Trunk raising and lowering, with arms (a) at side, (b) folded across chest. Five times, increasing gradually to 15.
  - (2) Lie on floor; bend knees to chest, extend legs slowly; bend to chest again and lower slowly. Five to fifteen times.
- h. Two members appointed to give demonstrations of checking for standing posture, and of exercises, at following meeting.
- i. All club members urged to practice their exercises daily.

Meeting 3.--Fifteen minutes.

- a. Two club members give 5-minute demonstration on good posture in standing and exercises for strengthening abdominal muscles.
- b. Good and poor positions in sleeping demonstrated by leader. Effect of sleeping position on posture; need of having bed flat, not sagging in middle.
- c. Breast-stroke exercise demonstrated; practiced by club members.
- d. Two members appointed to give demonstration at following meeting.
- e. Members to practice breast-stroke exercise 5 times, daily, increasing to 15, and continue exercises already learned.

Meeting 4.--Fifteen minutes for posture.

- a. Two club members give 3-minute demonstration of good position in sleeping and breast-stroke exercise.

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2/ For exercises to strengthen body muscles and foot arches, and for stunts and games, see Posture Exercises, Stunts, and Games (220-37, mimeo.), compiled by Miriam Birdseye and Ella Gardner, Division of Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

- b. Leader or club member discusses and illustrates proper sitting position and good and poor chairs. Explains effect of sitting position on standing position. Discusses sitting at desk in school; sitting at table.
- c. Leader has a club member show following exercises for broadening chest and flattening shoulder blades:
  - (1) Lie on floor, with narrow, hard pillow under shoulder blades, and knees drawn up to relax abdominal muscles.
  - (2) Windmill exercise: Lie on floor, arms at side; raise arms over head and lower them till they touch the floor back of the head; alternate right and left, slowly.
  - (3) Sit on floor, legs outstretched. Grasp broomstick, raise overhead, bring well down behind shoulder blades. Hold position 15 seconds and repeat 10 to 30 times.
- d. Two members appointed to give demonstration at following meeting.
- e. Members to practice all exercises.

Meeting 5.—Twenty minutes for posture.

- a. Two members give 5-minute demonstration on proper positions in sitting in school and at table, and describe properly built chair; show exercises for flattening shoulder blades and broadening chest.
- b. Members discuss ways of doing work that contribute to poor posture (farm activities for boys, housework for girls, carrying books or weights for all). Discuss how to minimize or counteract these effects.
- c. Members line up for posture, each member being constructively discussed by two other members appointed by the leader. Reasons should be given for criticisms. Club secretary records names of members judged to have A. B. C. and D postures, and reports improvements since first survey.
- d. Two members appointed to give demonstration in methods of doing farm work or house work to insure good posture.
- e. Members to practice all exercises.

Meeting 6.—Fifteen minutes for posture.

- a. Two members give 5-minute demonstration on possible bad effects of certain farm or household activities on posture, and proper positions to take.

- b. Effect of bad posture on breathing, digestion, and elimination emphasized.
- c. Exercises shown for correcting sway in lower back.
  - (1) Hang from bar, draw legs up to chest. Repeat 10 times.
  - (2) Rocking exercise. Lie on back, bend knees to chest and clasp with arms. Push head forward and rock back and forth on spine 5 to 10 times.
- d. Parts given out for posture play, team demonstration, or posture stunt. 3/
- e. Members to practice all exercises.

Meeting 7.--Fifteen minutes or more for posture.

- a. Review of posture subject matter.
- b. "Combination exercise" demonstrated:
  - 1. Lie on back, hands extended above head.
  - 2. Sit up, bend over, and touch toes with fingers.
  - 3. Sit erect; bend arms at side, finger tips touching neck and elbows held well back and level with shoulders.
  - 4. Raise arms straight up over head.
  - 5. With arms over head, lower trunk and swing feet up and over, without bending knees.
  - 6. Touch toes to ground back of head.
  - 7. Repeat, 3 times at first, and gradually work up to 10 times.
- c. Practice on play or team demonstration.
- d. Members to practice all exercises.

Meeting 8.--Take final survey of club members' posture and record improvement in individuals and in club as a whole, or give 20 to 30 minutes to team demonstrations, or play games that are particularly good for posture.

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3/ See Outline for Stunt on Posture (6083 mimeo. - rev. March 1937). Single copies free on request from the Division of Cooperative Extension, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

